

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

Patrick Berry, Henrietta Brown, Nadine Little, Dennis Barrow, Virginia Roy, Joel Westvig, Emmett Williams, *on behalf of themselves and a class of similarly-situated individuals*; and ZACAH,

Civil Action No. 20cv02189

Plaintiffs,

vs.

Hennepin County; Hennepin County Sheriff David Hutchinson, *in his individual and official capacity*; City of Minneapolis; Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, *in his individual and official capacity*; Minneapolis Chief of Police Medaria Arradondo, *in his individual and official capacity*; Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Al Bangoura, *in his individual and official capacity*; Park Police Chief at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Jason Ohotto, *in his individual and official capacity*; Police Officers John Does; and Police Officers Jane Does,

Defendants.

**DECLARATION OF EMMETT WILLIAMS
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'
MOTION FOR TEMPORARY
RESTRANDING ORDER**

I, Emmett Williams, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am one of the named Plaintiffs in this lawsuit. I submit this Declaration in support of Plaintiff's Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order, asking the Court to

enjoin Defendants from taking any action to forcibly remove unhoused persons from public spaces, destroying property, or otherwise negatively interfering with the encampments of unhoused persons.

2. I am a 39-year-old African American man.

3. I was born in Chicago and moved to Minneapolis when I was about 11 years old and have lived in the Twin Cities metro since.

4. I first became homeless in June 2020 when my landlord chose not to renew my lease.

5. I have been unable to work my regular jobs because of coronavirus. One of the main jobs I had was working at Target Center during basketball season, but since Target Center isn't open I'm not working.

6. Since June I have tried calling other landlords but have not gotten any call backs.

7. When I first lost my apartment I stayed with friends and relatives, but I didn't want to be a burden so I moved to a camp with my fiancé.

8. My fiancée and I first got to Powderhorn East in July. We were only there for about two and a half weeks before they forced us out.

9. We were at Powderhorn East when the cops started taping off the camp and the bulldozers came. We were able to grab most of our stuff, but I lost some clothing and my fiancée lost some things from her grandmother.

10. The whole situation was intense. I saw the police mace people. The cops told us they would arrest us if we didn't leave; they were really aggressive, and it seemed

like they were taunting us. I told the cops we still had stuff inside the tape and the cops didn't care—they just ignored us.

11. I felt violated after being forced out of Powderhorn. The sweep was unjustly done. We were in a public place. We weren't even given notice that the camp was going to be bulldozed.

12. My fiancée and I are currently living at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. We came here because a bus showed up to Powderhorn East while it was being bulldozed and the driver said they were taking people to MLK, so we grabbed our friends and got in.

13. I like living at MLK. I have a sense of community here—there are a lot of good people.

14. It feels like the parks board is trying to shut us down. They keep coming up with rules we never knew about. For example, they told one resident that he could not have a tent larger than 12 feet. They told me I couldn't have a generator. I haven't seen any written rules that have these restrictions.

15. I don't know where I'd go if I had to leave MLK. I've been told that the shelters are all full. If I had everything I needed I'd prefer to stay in a camp than a shelter anyway. Moving from here would also hinder some things in my life. We get donations here and Healthcare for the Homeless comes to provide medical support. I don't want to be forced to move from public land.

16. I am seeking an order asking that the Court to stop Defendants from taking any action to sweep camps when we have nowhere else to go and to stop destroying people's property.

I state under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: October 16, 2020


Emmett Williams